

# Waste Reduction Task Force

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## *Public & Private Participation Work Group #2*

**Second Meeting – November 15, 2007**

### **Meeting Summary**

Work Group Members Present by Phone: Charles Baines, Sami Barile, Faye Dalton, Sharon Smith, Marty Turbeville

Facilitator: Matt Maynard, TDEC

This meeting was held in conference call format due to the wide range of home locations of the participants. The topic covered in this meeting, Pros and Cons of public numbers versus public and private numbers, was determined to be an area needing further discussion during the October 18<sup>th</sup> work group meeting.

After covering a few questions about the next Task Force meeting (location, hotels, etc.), the group discussed Pros and Cons of continuing to use public and private numbers in the calculation of a waste reduction goal. One of the participants felt that using both was important to get the total picture of what is going on in the state when it comes to waste reduction. Another member stated concern that there would be counties that could not meet a 25% goal without private numbers. The idea was also expressed that it was important for private businesses to have some buy-in to recycling as costs associated with starting up a landfill are constantly increasing.

Conversely, some participants complained that they often have trouble getting private companies to report recycling data. The point was also made that larger counties contact a much smaller percentage of private businesses for data because they simply do not have the time to contact them all. One participant was concerned that recycling numbers from a processor was frequently double-counted if some of that amount was claimed by a business that also reported to the region. Another member stated that she received information one year from a company. The next year a different person in the same position stated that they didn't think there was any way the previous numbers were correct and then refused to supply the current year's data. It was discussed that while having private numbers may provide a better idea of the total picture of recycling in the state, that the roller-coaster effect not having 100% participation of the businesses may cause the picture to be even cloudier.

The group discussed Pros and Cons of using public numbers only in the calculation of a waste reduction goal. Again it was brought up that if public numbers only were used, some counties would not be able to achieve a 25% goal. At this point, it was discussed that if public numbers only were used a new numerical goal would need to be established, in the 5% to 15% range. One participant expressed concern that dropping private numbers and lowering the reduction goal would hurt public perception:

it may appear that the need for recycling is not as great because businesses aren't being tracked and the goal has been reduced.

Conversely, one member felt passionately if municipal governments were who is held responsible for meeting the goal, then hold them accountable for only what they control. She also felt that her numbers were the only ones she knew to be accurate and verifiable, but would support whole-heartedly a voluntary program for businesses to report their recycled tonnage online. This information could then be used as an indicator of what needed to be done instead of a factor determining a region's success or failure. It was also discussed that if a region chooses not to institute any public waste reduction efforts, they could still meet the goal if businesses in the region were recycling and willing to share that information. This was considered a problem because it is not in the spirit of the goal even if the numeric requirement were met.

It was agreed that this question, public only versus public and private, should be a question on the waste reduction goal questionnaire currently being designed.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, one participant proposed a new rule with two methods for demonstrating compliance. In the first, a new and more accurate base year would be created and reduction percentage would be determined using public numbers only. The numeric goal would likely be lower than 25%. In the second, a real-time method of calculating the goal would be used figuring in both public and private. This numeric goal would likely be higher than 25%. Each region could then choose which method to use and would not necessarily have to rely on the reporting of private businesses. The meeting was then concluded.

**The group requests the following information from TDEC:**

- None

**Areas to look further into include:**

- None discussed during meeting.

**Next meeting:**

A target date for middle of January was set for the next meeting.